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The President's Daily Brief

22 October 1970

46

~~*Top Secret*~~ 50X1

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

22 October 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Laos, enemy forces are preparing to counter recent government gains along the southwestern edge of the Plaine des Jarres. *(Page 1)*

Infiltration from North Vietnam this month continues at a relatively high rate. *(Page 2)*

Soviets

West Germans

(Page 3) 50X1

Austria is moving toward recognition of Communist China on the basis of the Canadian formula. *(Page 4)*

Soviet 50X1

(Page 5)

Zond 8 indicates the Soviets have not abandoned plans for a manned circumlunar mission. *(Page 5)* 50X1

We have nothing to confirm press reports that Iraq's military force is withdrawing from Jordan. *(Page 5)*

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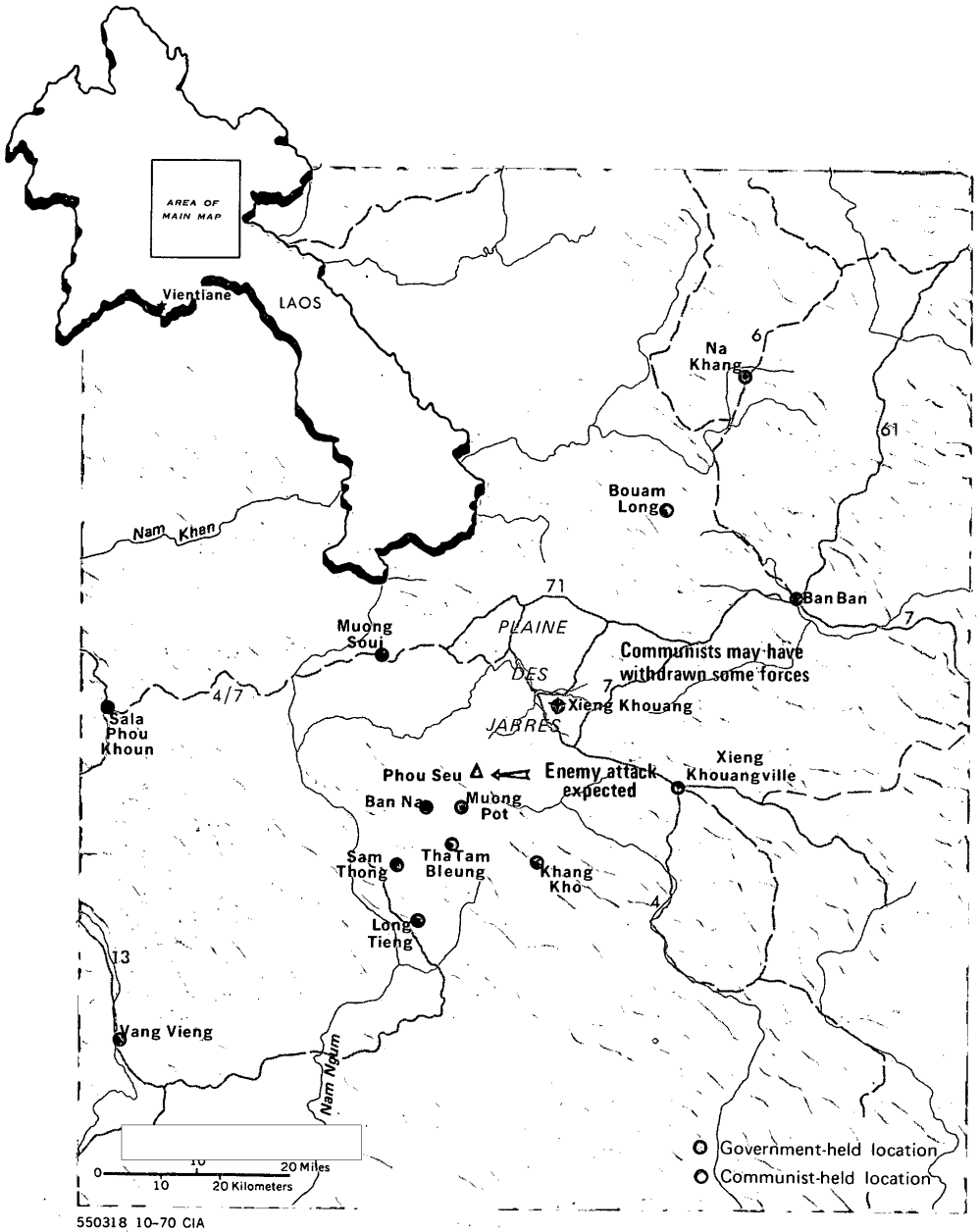

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LAOS

North Vietnamese forces are preparing to attack the twin peaks of Phou Seu Mountain which Vang Pao's irregulars captured on 18 October. At least three battalions will be involved, according to recent intercepts. One message indicated that a certain battalion would lead the operation against Phou Seu "since it had tanks."

Phou Seu is the highest elevation on the Plaine's western perimeter and is about five miles from Muong Pot and Ban Na, which government forces seized last week after several months of fighting. For some time both sides have attached considerable importance to controlling the high ground on the Plaine's southwestern rim. If the Communists succeed in retaking Phou Seu, they are likely to go on to contest the government's hold on Muong Pot and Ban Na.

Signs continue to accumulate, however, that the North Vietnamese are scaling down their strength in the north. Messages from North Vietnam's Northwest Military Region indicate a significant reduction in the number of its subordinate units in northern Laos since last May. A regimental-sized force that has been operating along the eastern edge of the Plaine may be returning shortly to North Vietnam. There is no new information on the location of the NVA 312th Division--for the last year the major backup force in vicinity of the Plaine--but the weight of evidence suggests that it has been transferred to the Vinh area of North Vietnam.

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NORTH VIETNAM

About 9,600 North Vietnamese troops have been detected entering the infiltration system so far this month, [redacted] Around 5,500 of these are slated for southern South Vietnam and adjacent areas of Cambodia. About 1,200 are headed for northern South Vietnam, and 2,800 are designated for southern Laos. The destinations of a few groups are not clear.

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About 1,000 of the troops headed for south Laos probably are part of the three regiments of the 308th and 320th divisions which have been moving south since early September. One of these regiments has now been detected in Laos, along with a forward element of the 320th Division headquarters; the other two apparently are still in southern North Vietnam. One other regiment from the 320th, which had been near the Demilitarized Zone since June, is now moving north, and two regiments from the 308th are still in garrison near Hanoi.

Last year, infiltration to South Vietnam did not begin until late October, and no troops set out for southern South Vietnam until early November. The total number of troops leaving for South Vietnam last October was about 4,500.

The early resumption this year of personnel and supply movements to the south suggests that Hanoi is prepared to carry out a large-scale manpower and logistic support program during the 1970-71 dry season. The North Vietnamese will probably need to maintain a substantial flow of men and supplies through the dry season to sustain even the present low level of combat activity.

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USSR - WEST GERMANY

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WESTERN EUROPE - COMMUNIST CHINA

Austrian Foreign Minister Kirchschlaeger told Secretary Rogers early this week that he had proposed to his parliament's foreign affairs committee that Peking be recognized on the basis of the Canadian formula.

The Austrians had previously warned that their position as a neutral state would require a new China policy if additional NATO members recognized Peking. The government now apparently has only to secure the agreement of the opposition People's Party, which should not prove difficult. When press reports of this move appear--probably this week--other states that are reviewing their policy may well be influenced to shift.

The Belgian Foreign Ministry has authorized certain of its diplomats to make contact with the Chinese Communists to determine Chinese interest in obtaining recognition. The Belgians, in addition to having a special problem with Peking because of the imprisonment of one of their nationals, are at present not willing to break relations with Taipei. Luxembourg recently indicated that it would not be far behind Belgium on recognition. It had already decided to switch from opposition to abstention on the Albanian resolution to replace Taiwan with Peking in the UN.

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NOTES

USSR: [redacted] 50X1

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USSR: The launching of Zond 8 [redacted] indicates the Soviets have not abandoned plans for a manned circumlunar mission. [redacted] 50X1

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Iraq-Jordan: We have nothing to confirm press reports that Iraq's military force is withdrawing from Jordan. [redacted] The Baghdad authorities have preferred to keep a sizable force in Jordan as a demonstration of their militancy toward Israel and to provide a holding area for unreliable troops. Only last week they rebuffed Husayn's suggestion that their force be removed or subordinated to the Jordan Arab Army. It is possible, however, that circumstances in Iraq--the political maneuvering going on in Baghdad or the threat of renewed Kurdish insurgency--could impel the recall of all or part of the Iraqi units. 50X1

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